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ABSTRACT

The Career Ladder Program in Tennessee is a comprehensive teacher evaluation and certification system. The program is designed to attract, retain, and reward excellent teachers. On the basis of performance evaluation, teachers can move up a Career Ladder which provides monetary incentives and allows teachers professional growth opportunities through assisting beginning teachers and other extended contract activities. Local school systems are responsible for evaluation at the three lower levels of the Career Ladder--the probationary level, the apprentice level, and Career Level I. Evaluation at Levels II and III of the Career Ladder is a state responsibility. Links to a career development program allow teachers to improve performance as they climb up the ladder. Career Level II and III teachers are assigned to assist teachers at the lower levels to provide continuous monitoring and support for teachers at the school building level. The Careeer Ladder Progam in Tennessee allows teachers many options as they approach their chosen careers. (CB)

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THE CAREER LADDER PROGRAM IN TENNESSEE

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presented to

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THE CAREER LADDER PROGRAM IN TENNESSEE

AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

The term "Career Ladder" is a new one for the field of education. It is a term that may cause the greatest change in public education to occur during this century. Career Ladder programs have various features but their common purpose is "...rewarding teachers and administrators and providing incentives to enter and remain in the profession." (Southern Region Education Board, 1984, p. 1). The rewarding of teachers and administrators in most Career Ladder Programs includes financial and professional opportunities. The rewards are based on assessment of outstanding performance. A recent update done by the U. S. Department of Education on a state-by-state status of educational reform initiatives reveals that 14 states have enacted or approved performance based incentive plans for implementation or pilot testing; 8 states have legislative or State Board mandates to develop plans, and 15 states have incentive plans under consideration. (United States Department of Education, October, 1984). There is no doubt that Career Ladder programs have gained national attention and interest.

Many people are amazed to discover that the Career Ladder concept at the state level originated and was developed in the State of Tennessee. Why should a southern state, not known for its educational

excellence, suddenly emerge on the national scene in the arena of educational reform? This paper will outline the reasons for Tennessee's movement into educational reform--the nature of the state, the support of the legislature and the leadership of the young, Republican Governor. Part I will discuss the development, formulation, and implementation of the Career Ladder Program. Changes which occurred in the program during the legislative debate will be outlined. Part two of the paper will focus on the development of the teacher evaluation system that is used in the Career Ladder Program. Part three of the paper will address the local evaluation of teachers and how local evaluation of teachers is an integral part of the Career Ladder Program.

The State of Tennessee

The State of Tennessee has long been known for its "quality of life." The state abounds with natural beauty from the moutainous eastern region to the flatlands of the western, delta region. To the southeast is Great Smokey Mountains National Park--the park visited by three times as many visitors as any other national park in America. The center of the state has rolling countryside with rich farmland and the famous "walking horses" of Shelbyville, Tennessee. The beautiful Tennessee River rambles its way west across the state. Waterways are important to Tennessee. "There are 28 major reservoirs, 19,000 miles of warm and cold water rivers and other streams, and thousands of smaller lakes and ponds." (The Governors Come to Tennessee, 1984, p. 17). In the western corner of Tennessee, the delta area of Memphis offers its flatland and cotton fields. There is no doubt that the natural beauty of the state abounds from east to west.

In addition to natural beauty, Tennessee has a number of other drawing cards. Anyone who loves country music has heard of Nashville, country music capital of the world, and home of the Grand Ole Opry. Tennessee also has major manufacturing and service industry headquarters such as Eastman Kodak, Alcoa Aluminum, Federal Express, Holiday Inn, and Hospital Corporation of America. Foreign industry also is being attracted to the state and a new multi-million dollar Nissan plant has been built in middle Tennessee. Technology reigns supreme in the Knoxville/Oak Ridge Technological corridor and Northern Telecom has located in Nashville.

Tennessee and Public Education

While Tennessee has natural beauty and resources and has attracted a wide diversity of industries, its educational system has not been exemplary. Tennessee ranks forty-fourth in the nation in family income, ranks forty-seventh in per pupil expenditure for education, and before the Career Ladder Program, ranked forty-first in teacher salaries. Student achievement at the elementary level has been close to national norms on standardized tests, but at the high school level it is below national norms. The student drop-out rate is a cause of major concern as is the fact that nearly one-third of the students fail the high school proficiency test at the ninth grade level.

The Legislature and Education

The legislature in Tennessee was concerned about the progress of public education and was cognizant of the need for improvement. Where

does one begin when major changes are needed in an organization that is steeped in tradition and a desire to maintain the status quo? The Tennessee legislature began in 1981 by commissioning a study of education in the state. Joint Senate Resolution No. 56 stated its purpose as:

> A RESOLUTION to create a task force to study the public education system in Tennessee in order to develop a long range plan for public education in this state and to make recommendations and report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly. (Senate Joint Resolution No. 56, Approved June 12, 1981).

Based on this resolution a twenty-seven member task force was formed to examine Tennessee's public education and to develop a plan for addressing areas of needed reform. This study was initiated prior to the major reform studies on education, including "A Nation at Risk." Tennessee was searching for ways to change and improve public education before the impetus for reform appeared at the national level.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study was an eighteen-month study of public education completed in December, 1982. This study recommended four areas which were later incorporated in the Career Ladder Program. The report recommended that:

> The State Board of Education and LEAs [sic] should investigate ways of rewarding outstanding teachers (as determined by fair and impartial evaluation) over and beyond their set salaries.
>
> The State Board of Education should consider requiring an apprenticeship program for beginning teachers prior to professional certification. During such a period, the apprentice-teacher would be closely supervised and evaluated by a master teacher.
>
> Uniform evaluation instruments should be developed at the state level for all certificated personnel and be required for usage by LEAs.

In developing or providing such an instrument, the State Department should utilize current research on evaluative techniques and statewide practices. (Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study, 1982, pp. 466-68).

The Governor and The Better Schools Program

This Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study provided the germinal thoughts for what would later be incorporated into the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 (CERA)--the legislative mandate for the Career Ladder Program. Building upon the work of the legislative study, Governor Lamar Alexander in his State of Education Address on January 28, 1983 outlined the Better Schools Program--a program designed to improve education in Tennessee in order to provide better jobs and higher income for Tennesseans. The total Better Schools Program includes ten major points:

Basic Skills First - A program which identifies 1300 skills in reading and math for students to master before entering ninth grade, an instructional program to teach those skills, and a proficiency test to assess them.

Computer Skills Next - A computer literacy program for grades seven and eight.

Kindergarten for Every Child - A mandatory requirement that all children attend kindergarten before entering first grade.

More High School Math and Science - A program requiring two units each of math and science at the high school level, an increase of one unit in math and one in science over the previous requirement.

Special Residential Summer Schools For Gifted Juniors and Seniors A program to offer summer programs for gifted and talented students.

Redefine High School Vocational Education Curriculum- A program to provide relevant programs and equipment to meet the job needs of the 80's.

Classroom Discipline - A program to create alternative schools for disruptive students as well as climate-improvement research projects.

Adult Job Skill Training Under the Board of Regents - A program to reorganize adult job training programs at community colleges, technical institutes and area vocational schools.

Centers of Excellence at Universities - A program to pull the best talent and research efforts into selected universities

The Master Teacher Program and Master Principal Program -A program to attract the best people into the profession of education, to retain them in the profession and to reward them for outstanding performance.

Through its own initiative--the legislative study and the willingness of a Governor to make education a number one priority before it was the "in thing to do"--Tennessee had a Better Schools Program on the drawing board in January, 1983. This was eight months prior to the issuance of "A Nation At Risk" and the public clamor to improve education. Rather than being reactive to national studies, Tennessee was proactive, with its action plan already in place.

Governor Alexander noted that the most important point of the Better Schools Program was the Master Teacher Plan, later to be known as the Career Ladder Program. Governor Alexander stated that:

> The Master Teacher Program is an incentive pay system that will make teaching a fully professional career, draw our best young people into it, keep our best teachers in it, challenge our best teachers to do even better, and inspire excellence in our class rooms by rewarding excellence in our teachers. (Governor Lamar Alexander, January, 1983, p. 2).

The Governor, working with the Commissioner of Education, Robert L. McElrath and the staff of the State Department of Education and Chester Finn from for Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy, forwarded copies of the Master Teacher Program and Master Principal Program to educators

in the state and asked them to review the programs and comment on them. In the Spring of 1983, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced legislation for the Better Schools Program and recommended a sales tax increase to fund the $210 millon program.

The Legislation

The debate on the bill was heated. The Tennessee Education Association opposed the "Master Teacher Bill" and waged an all-out effort to kill the legislation. The legislature, however, neither approved nor disapproved of the Master Teacher Program but postponed action on the bill for one year of study. The legislature appointed a Select Committee on Education to study the proposed bill during the summer and fall of 1983.

On November 23, 1983, the Select Committee voted to recommend an educational reform bill to the General Assembly. The Select Committee in a summary of its recommendations stated that:

> The foundation of the legislation is a performance-based Career Ladder plan for teachers, principals and supervisors. Progress up the Career Ladder would be based in part upon evaluations composed of objective, specified criteria. Participation in the Career Ladder would be voluntary for any present teacher and mandatory for a teacher certified after July 1, 1984. (Report of the Select Committee on Education, January, 1984, pp. 82-83).

The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Reform Act became a reality in the spring of 1984 when it was passed and funded by the Tennessee legislature.

The Career Ladder Program

This paper will address the program as it applies to teachers. An administrator program, which includes principals, assistant principals, and instructional supervisors, is also a part of the Career Ladder Program. The Career Ladder Program for teachers is a five-tier ladder which provides for teacher certification based upon performance. The five levels are: probationary, apprentice, Career Level I, Career Level II, and Career Level III.

To obtain a probationary certificate one must graduate from an approved college of education and must obtain a minimum qualifying score on the National Teachers Examination. The probationary certificate is a one year certificate which is non-renewable. During the probationary year, a teacher is supervised by two tenured teachers. Evaluation of the teacher is done at the local school level under a system approved by the State Board of Education. The local school system recommends a probationary teacher for an apprentice certificate.

An apprentice certificate is valid for three years and is non-renewable. Apprentice teachers are evaluated annually at the local school level under a system approved by the State Board of Education. The local school system recommends an apprentice teacher for a Career Level I certificate. However, before an apprentice certificate is issued, the State Department of Education reviews and discusses the teacher's evaluation with the principal and interviews the teacher.

A Career Level I certificate is valid for five years and is renewable. Career Level I teachers are evaluated at the local school

level under a system approved by the State Board of Education. The local school system must evaluate a Career Level I teacher twice during the five year certificate period. In the fifth year the State Department of Education reviews and discusses the teacher's evaluation with the principal and interviews the teacher. A teacher holding a Career Level I certificate receives a $1,000 incentive and is employed for a regular ten-month contract. Part two of this paper will discuss the state evaluation process used for Career Ladder II and III, and Part three will discuss the guidelines for local evaluation for Career Ladder certificates,

A Career Level II certificate is valid for five years and is renewable. A state evaluation is conducted to obtain a Career Level II certificate. A Career Level II teacher is evaluated twice during the five year duration of the certificate. A teacher holding a Career Level II certificate may choose a ten-month contract which provides a $2,000 incentive or an eleven-month contract which provides a $4,000 incentive.

A Career Level III certificate is valid for five years and is renewable. A state evaluation is required to earn a Career Level III certificate. A Career Level III teacher is evaluated twice during the five year duration of the certificate. A teacher holding a Career Level III certificate may choose a ten-month contract which provides a $3,000 incentive, an eleven-month contract which provides a $5,000 incentive, or a twelve-month contract which provides a $7,000 incentive.

All teachers entering the teaching profession in Tennessee after July 1, 1984 must enter the Career Ladder certification program. The Career Ladder program is optional for all teachers who have held

certificates and taught prior to July 1, 1984. Currently employed teachers may enter the program at the level of their choice, providing that they have the requisite years of experience. To enter the program at Career Level I during 1984-85, currently employed teachers must have at least three years of teaching experience and must meet one of five fast track options available for 1984-85 for entering the program. To enter the program at Career Level II, currently employed teachers must have at least eight years of teaching experience and meet the minimum qualifying standards of the state evaluation process. To enter the program at Career Level III, currently employed teachers must have at least twelve years of teaching experience and meet the minimum qualifying standards of the state evaluation process.

Changes to the Original Master Teacher Plan

Those interested in the Career Ladder concept often want to know what major changes occurred in the program during the legislative process. The Master Teacher Program announced and outlined by Governor Alexander in the early 1983 was modified, but the basic concept of rewarding and retaining outstanding teachers and making teaching a truly professional career remains intact. Modifications did occur, however, and this section will discuss six of the changes in the original plan.

- The original plan had a four-tiered ladder with the apprentice level being a flexible three to five year certificate. The plan now provides for a one year probationary level and a three year apprentice level. This change appears to be a minor one but more clearly differentiates the beginning first year teacher. It also changes the length of non-renewable certificates from a maximum of five years to a maximum of four years.
- The titles of the certificates for each rung of the ladder changed during each step of the process. In the initial proposal the names

were apprentice, professional, senior and master. The Select Committee added a level and renamed the certificates probationary, apprentice, professional, senior, and distinguised senior teacher. The final bill titled the certificate levels probationary apprentice, Career Level I, Career Level II, and Career Level III. While this semantic difference seems trivial, it does reflect a desire not to name outstanding teachers by a term which clearly describes their talents such as master teacher or senior distinguised teacher but to use a more neutral term that is less revealing such as Career Level III.

- The original plan contained quotas by school system on the percent of teachers who could enter the upper levels. The quotas allowed 25% of all teachers to obtain Senior Level (II) and 15% of all teachers to obtain Master (III) Level. The quotas, in effect, meant that 60% of all teachers with eligible years of experience could qualify, but they would be proportionately distributed among school systems. The Select Committee requested that limitations be based on high program standards rather than percentages. The final bill does not put a percentage limit on the number of teachers who can qualify at the upper levels, nor does it limit the location of the teachers by school system. A fear exists that some school systems may be able to attract more Career II and III teachers which will bring about an inequity in distribution across the state. Also, since there is no limit on the numbers who can qualify for the program, great care must be taken in the standard setting process and in the financial budgeting for the system.

- The original Master Teacher Plan provided incentive supplements based upon the teacher's salary. Senior teachers (II) with eleven month contracts would receive a 30% salary increase, while Master teachers (III) with a twelve-month contract, would receive a 60% salary increase. The final bill allows for flat rate incentives ranging from $1,000 at Career Level I to $7,000 at Career Level III. As local supplements to teachers' salaries create disparity in the state, this change will allow for equal payment to all outstanding teachers.

- The original plan provided for state evaluation of all teachers in the Career Ladder program. One of the more important changes moved teachers at the lower rungs of the ladder--probationary, apprentice, and Career Level 1--from state evaluation to evaluation by local school systems. The state reviews evaluations at the apprentice and Career Level I level, but only sends in an evaluation team if there is a disagreement with the local evaluation. It is yet to be determined if this in an improvement to the plan. Certainly local school systems should be responsible for the evaluation of professional staff. However, this evaluation is no longer just for reemployment since it determines state certifcation of teachers. Locals must be diligent in following state guidelines, in the training of personnel for evaluation, and in being sure that state guidelines are followed. This change may create a more uniform and improved evaluation at the local level, but it also may cause embarassment to school systems if they

have incompetent evaluators or if they do not follow state mandates for evaluation procedures.

- Entry into the program was originally only through full evaluation of the teacher. For currently employed teachers with three or more years of experience the bill was amended to allow what has become known as "five fast-track options" into the Career Ladder Program. The fast track provisions are only in effect for the first year of the program--the 1984-85 school year--and only for teachers with three or more years of experience who wish to enter at Career Level I. Teachers in this category may enter the program by:

  (1) Obtaining a passing score on the NTE Core Battery and a positive recommendation from the local school system, or

  (2) Obtaining a passing score on an appropriate NTE Specialty Area test and a positive recommendation from the local school system, or

  (3) Obtaining a passing score on the Tennessee Career Ladder Test and a positive recommendation from the local school system, or

  (4) Obtaining positive results from a state approved local evaluation, or

  (5) Obtaining positive results from a state approved staff development program.

While the fast track provisions have had positive effects, they have also had negative effects. On the positive side, the Tennessee Instructional Model has been created to provide a quality staff development program for teachers. Many teachers and administrators have participated in this program which is designed to improve instruction in the classroom. On the negative side, the law allows for teachers to enter into Career Level I without a positive local recommendation. Many school systems are reporting that teachers who have negative evaluations will be allowed to enter Career Level 1 through the staff development process. Having five options for entering the program has also caused confusion for teachers and for local school systems.

Communication continues to be a problem and administrating three different tests with various administration dates and locations is not only complex for those dealing with the logistics but often confusing for teachers dealing with program options. The record keeping burden for the state agency is enormous under the fast-track provisions. Fast-track provisions allow teachers options and flexibility in entering the program the first year, but create some hazards that were unanticipated at the conceptual and legislative levels. Other changes and modifications have been made to the program, but these six issues can alert future developers of career ladder programs to important areas where change can and did occur in the Tennessee plan.

Teacher Response to the Career Ladder Program

After all the effort put into modifying and passing the legislation, no one knew what the response of teachers would be to the Career Ladder program. It was a given that all new teachers would enter the program, but what would be the response of currently employed and certificated teachers in Tennessee who could volunteer for the new program or who could retain the rights and privileges of their existing certificates?

The response of teachers to the Career Ladder program has been overwhelming. As educators they remain the prime critics of the program, continually discussing its weak areas and suggesting ways the program should be changed. When the count was taken, however, Tennessee teachers supported the Career Ladder Program. Nearly 39,000 of 41,000 educators in the state eligible for the program elected to enter it in

the first year! More teachers than can be evaluated during 1984-85 have applied for either Career Level II or III, and thousands of teachers currently are being evaluated for the upper levels of the program.

There is no doubt that teachers' voices will be heard in refining and in redesigning selected portions of the Career Ladder program during the implementation years. The mandate in Tennessee is clear. The Governor proposed the program, the legislature refined and created legislation for the program, the teachers are participating in the program, and the public, through a one-cent sales tax increase, is funding the program. During 1984-85 the program is funded at $50 million, during 1985-86 the program is funded at $85 million and during 1986-87 the program is funded at $120 million. The Career Ladder program is here to stay in Tennessee. The next five years will measure the goals it is attempting to achieve--the ability to attract the best people into the profession, the ability to retain them in the profession, and the ability to reward those whose performance is outstanding.

Part two of this paper will discuss the development and implementation of the evaluation system for teachers who apply for the upper levels of the Career Ladder Program—Career Levels II and III. Part three of the paper will discuss the development and implementation of the local evaluation system for teachers at probationary, apprentice and Career Level I.

THE EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Tennessee Career Ladder system was designed to serve a dual role, providing both the summative evaluation required for determining career ladder status and the formative evaluation desired for teacher career development. Unlike many norm-referenced systems, the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System required that decisions be reached without reference to quotas. Performance data could be used in the development of the system, but not to directly determine Career Ladder status. A competency based assessment using performance data primarily as an aid in the development of the instruments was, therefore, selected as the most appropriate measurement approach.

Since pay and promotion depended on the assessment process, every effort was made to assure an equitable evaluation process. This dictated that evaluators be highly qualified teachers from school systems other than that of the candidate, and that they be trained to high standards of reliability; that evaluation instruments be carefully developed and fully field tested prior to use; and that all of the individuals and instruments used be as free of bias as possible. Multiple data sources were determined to be the fairest and most thorough approach to evaluation for this purpose. A competency-based multiple data source was, therefore, designed as the basis for the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System.

Competencies To Be Assessed

The development of the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System approximated the procedures commonly used in the development of criterion-referenced tests. First, the objectives to be measured were identified. Although the final list is hierarchically organized, giving the impression that the domains, indicators, and measurement items were deductively generated, that is not the case. Hundreds of statements related to effective teaching or teacher practices were generated through examination of the research literature.

These were circulated to Tennessee teachers for review and comment. After revisions based upon teacher input, the competencies were again circulated, this time for approval. Those competencies accepted by most of the reviewing teachers were retained. From these, a subset of measurable, generic, and important competencies were identified. These were grouped and ordered hierarchically with changes in wording as needed. All competencies were content reviewed to revise or eliminate any which appeared to be biased, not only with respect to race, sex, religion, and handicap, but also with respect to the grade level and subject area being taught; the socio-economic status, ability, or urbanicity of the school and its students; the resources available to the teacher; and other factors which might make an objective inappropriate for some teachers or teaching situations. (Note: only regular classroom teachers and subjects in

grades K-12 were included. Separate systems are being developed for teachers of vocational and special education, and for other special area groups.)

The final approved competencies were organized into five domains: planning, instructional strategies, evaluation, classroom management, and leadership (listed in Teacher Orientation Manual Appendix, pages 14-18). These are subdivided into indicators and then into measurement items. In addition to the five domains and their indicators, four screening indicators were identified. These were indicators which would be required at a minimum competency level but would not contribute to the Career Ladder status. The four indicators were performance of professional responsibilities, reading, writing, and oral communication.

Data Sources

Once the competencies to be measured were finalized, each was examined to determine how information about the candidate's performance on that objective might best be collected. At least two sources of information were identified for each objective. Considered sources of information included the evaluator, candidate, peer teachers, students, parents, principal, school staff (e.g. secretary, custodians, cafeteria workers), and district staff (e.g. instructional supervisors). Formats for collecting the information were selected based on the characteristics of the information desired and of the respondents.

Considered formats included: direct observation, measurement of products (e.g. lesson plans, student performance), questionnaires, interviews, and tests. The initial set of selected data sources included seven instruments: evaluator observation in the classroom; structured interview of the candidate; interview of the principal; questionnaire for peer teachers; questionnaire for students; written test of reading, writing, and professional knowledge; and evaluator rating of a portfolio. Other respondents and data collection formats were eliminated for a variety of reasons. Some were considered inappropriate for the Career Ladder decision process; some were too difficult to work with in the time available for initial implementation.

Once the data sources were selected, items measuring as many of the indicators or measurement items as possible were developed for each data source. Development procedures varied according to the type of instrument but always included item review and pilot testing followed by item revision and additional pilot testing as needed.

Classroom Observation

The classroom observation was at once the most important and most difficult instrument to develop. This was because a highly objective (low inference) format was desired and because the observation needed to be clearly keyed to the already identified competencies. A review of existing low-inference observation instruments indicated

that a high level of inference would be required to rescore their data to match the competencies. Existing behaviorally anchored rating scales and other teacher rating systems were rejected as too subjective for this purpose. A new, competency-based, low inference observation system was, therefore, created for field testing by staff with the assistence of consultants.

Coding of teacher behaviors related to the competencies formed the basis of the system. All coding of the primary matrix of the form began with the teacher's action. For ease of coding, the teacher action column was divided into sections related to task description, presentation of content, practice and review, monitoring and adjustment, providing feedback, and other classroom procedures. These, however, did not need to occur in order. This approach permitted the evaluator to begin coding at any stage in the lesson and also allowed full credit to teachers using instructional methodologies (e.g. direct instruction, discovery methods) which require different sequencing of activities.

In addition to coding teacher activities, the primary matrix of the observation form included space to code teacher affect (verbal or non-verbal) and student response or initiated activities (appropriate or inappropriate). After pilot testing, this matrix was reduced to include only teacher behavior, teacher positive affect, student response,

student initiation, and the appropriateness of student response.

A second coding matrix was developed to handle classroom management data. Coding of this matrix began when a student or students were noted to be off-task. Teacher reaction (including no reaction) and the resultant student behavior (complience or continued off-task behavior) were also coded. Numbers of student academic and procedural questions were also tallied. Finally a series of direct questions were included. These covered areas such as the general teaching method in use (lecture, discussion, independent work), the group size (whole class, subgroup, individuals), method of selecting students to respond to questions, use of media or meterials, extent of student lack of understanding, teacher reteaching in response to lack of understanding, numbers of students (in the class, off task, waiting), interruptions occuring during the observation period (avoidability, elapsed length of time between end of interruption and resumption of class), and evidence of favoritism on the basis of race or sex (in academic interactions, discipline, or positive affect).

The two matrix areas were combined to form a "scan" of four minutes. Three additional minutes were allotted to the evaluator to complete the added questions. Seven of these scans were to be completed in a typical observation period. This classroom observation was preceeded by a pre-observation conference with the candidate in which the

evaluator was briefed on the intended content of the class (nature of the lesson, subject and grade level, major objectives, activities, and procedures for evaluating student learning) and any special circumstances such as students of low socio-economic status, one or more mainstreamed special education students, slow learners, gifted students, lack of instructional materials, teacher assignment to teach an inappropriate course or grade level, one or more students with special problems, and organizational dysfunctions).

After the observation, the evaluator answered additional questions about the teacher's communication skills (speech, grammar, writing), planning and management, use of resources, and facilities. A post-observation conference permitted the teacher to explain any aspects of the class which might otherwise be incorrectly interpreted by the evaluator. In it, the evaluator also shared one strength and one weakness noted with the teacher. For purposes of field-testing only, the evaluator's rating of the candidate's performance with respect to each of the indicators covered in the observation was included at the end of the observation booklet. This was used to help validate the observation scale in the field test data analysis.

Candidate Interview

The candidate interview was developed by Appalachia Educational Laboratory under contract to the state. It was developed as a highly structured series of basic and follow-up questions to be asked of each candidate. The initial version of the interview contained 32 item sets. Each of the question sets was accompanied by a behaviorally-anchored five-point rating scale. The rating scales were cumulative with the lowest level indicating competence below the Career Ladder I level and the highest indicating exemplary performance on it. Candidates were asked to provide documentation to accompany their answers to the interview questions to make the interview process more valid and reliable. This made the interview overlap the portfolio rating in some respects. Candidates were permitted to use materials from the interview in the portfolio as well.

The initial version of the interview took more than three hours to conduct. Rather than reduce the number of questions per rating, and, therefore, the thoroughness of the rating, entire question sets were deleted from the interview process prior to the field testing. Those kept were selected on the basis that they were not as well covered by alternate data sources.

Superordinate (Principal) Interview

The principal interview was constructed by staff. More like a questionnaire than an interview, it was to be administered directly by the evaluator. This process was to minimize the time requirement for the principal (who might have a dozen or more teachers applying for the Career Ladder) while maintaining direct contact between the principal and evaluator and allowing the principal to add orally information which he or she might feel unwilling to commit to paper. Ratings were on a four-point scale ranging from below average to outstanding. The principal could also indicate that he or she did not know the answer and designate someone else to respond to that question.

The principal interview did not ask for the principal's opinion of the teacher, but rather used the principal to extend the observation system in the areas delineated by the competencies. Each item asked for information about the teacher's behavior (e.g. develops student remediation plans which are based on diagnostic data).

Peer-Teacher Questionnaire

The peer-teacher questionnaire, like the principal interview, was developed by staff and designed to extend the observation rather than to solicit opinions. Only competencies in the leadership domain were considered suitable for inclusion in the peer-questionnaire since peers do not generally observe each other in the classroom.

Typical content of the peer questionnaire asked about whether this teacher generally shared materials and ideas with other teachers.

Student Questionnaire

Like the principal interview and peer-teacher questionnaire, the student questionnaires were developed by staff to extend the observation system. Two forms of the student questionnaire were developed: one for grades 2-6 and the other for grades 7-12. Differences between the two forms were primarily in the level of vocabulary used and the length. The secondary form was developed first, then shortened and simplified for elementary use. Typical content for the student questionnaire asked whether this teacher generally noticed when students were not paying attention.

Written Test

Although teacher evaluation has typically rested heavily on written tests, use of a written test in the Tennessee Career Ladder evaluation system was limited. Two of the screening competencies (that is pass or fail rather than a contributor to the Career Ladder level determination) were ability to read and write. These were best measured by minimum competency written tests. A multiple choice reading test, suitable for teachers, administrators and other certificated educators was developed according to criterion-referenced measurement procedures and a cut-off

score was set for it. A set of writing sample prompts and scoring procedures for holistic, pass or fail scoring were also developed for field testing.

Since four of the domains (planning, teaching strategies, evaluation, and classroom management) had knoweldge components, a criterion-referenced multiple-choice test was developed to cover these. Data from this Professional Skills test were handled in the same way as data from the other instruments. No cutoff scores were used with the data for Career Ladder II or III status determination. Open-ended test items such as constructing lesson plans were considered and rejected primarily because of lack of development time. Development of all of the Career Ladder tests was contracted to IOX Assessment Associates.

Portfolio Rating

Although portfolios are widely used in a number of fields (e.g. art, music composition, journalism), their use in education is relatively new. The Tennessee Career Ladder portfolio, like the candidate interview, was contracted to Appalachia Educational Laboratory. Like the other instruments, the portfolio was keyed to the competencies. Each item identified for inclusion was related to one or more of the domains. Teachers were asked to submit a set of instructional plans (unit and lesson); indicators of student progress; classroom rules, policies, and procedures; a list of professional development activities; and a list of

leadership activities. Each portfolio rating area was accompanied by a five-point rating scale. Some of these scales were cumulative in nature, like those in the interviews. Others were collective (scales in which a series of indicators were evaluated separately then summed for a rating. For example, if four of the five indicators were noted, the rating was a four). Instructions to the candidate and evaluator specifically discounted the presentation of materials (the "stained glass" effect) in favor of the quality of the content. Candidates were asked to focus on showing competency and not merely compiling masses of evidence.

Field Testing The System

Field Test Evaluators

Although each instrument was pilot tested independently, field testing was conducted for all of the instruments simultaneously using an evaluation system as much like the planned final system as possible. Fifty evaluators were selected to conduct the field test. First nominees were solicited from school superintendents and instructional supervisors. Later, in response to teacher demand, application forms were made available to teachers on a statewide basis. Where initially it was expected that few outstanding teachers would volunteer to leave their classrooms for two months during the spring, this proved to be inaccurate since more than 700 teachers applied for the

50 field test slots. Many indicated that they had used the same classroom aide or certificated substitute teacher for years and felt secure in leaving their classrooms.

The application form asked for information about the teacher's previous experience, willingness to undertake the task of learning the new system and traveling statewide for six weeks, and reason for wanting to participate. Initial selection of evaluators was done through a review of applications to select individuals from a range of grade levels and subject areas who were from across the state. Recommendations from principals or instructional supervisors were solicited by telephone or in person in addition to the letters of recommendation supplied by the applicants.

In addition to outstanding skills as a classroom teacher, each field test evaluator needed to have the ability and drive to learn the new evaluation system, the willingness to conform to the system rather than substituting his or her own judgment of good teaching, the independence to travel alone statewide for a six week perion, and the interpersonal skills to deal with a large number of teachers and principals who might be anxious or even hostile to the evaluation system.

Training Field Test Evaluators

Training materials had been created as the instruments were developed and were now themselves piloted and revised. Sample portfolios were developed for use in practicing portfolio ratings and as checks on inter-rater reliability.

Structured interviews were audio taped and acted out by staff members. Observations were video taped and then conducted in field settings in the schools.

Training the evaluators took more than two weeks, eight to ten hours a day. During this period, the evaluators and staff lived and worked together in a hotel. Staff spent each day conducting training sessions, first in a classroom setting and later using field observation training in small groups in local schools. Evenings were often spent revising the next day's curriulum based on the problems encountered during the day.

Evaluators were required to learn to administer each of the instruments, and to pass reliability checks on the observation, the structured interview, and the portfolio rating. Although all of the evaluators eventially passed these reliability checks, the process itself created high levels of evaluator anxiety, and staff members conducted additional training and review sessions in the evening and on weekends for those having difficulty in meeting the rigorous standards. No evaluator was permitted to administer an instrument until he or she had passed the appropriate reliability checks.

Field Test Candidates

Field test candidates were selected as a stratified random sample of Tennessee teachers in regular K-12 classrooms. In order to provide each of Tennessee's 142 school systems the opportunity to participate in the field

test, at least one field test candidate was nominated from each system. The remaining candidates were allotted according to system size. Once a system, school, grade level and subject area had been identified, the school was asked to provide a list of all teachers in that category and two were randomly selected, one as the desired field test candidate and the other as an alternate should the first decline.

In each system, the superintendent was first asked for permission to contact the school, then the principal was asked for permission to contact the teacher, then the teacher was asked whether he or she would be willing to participate.

Only about 10% of the teachers asked declined, and most of these were replaced by a designated alternate. In a few cases it was necessary to select another school or system. The final field test candidate pool consisted of 278 teachers.

In addition to gaining experience with the new Career Ladder system and receiving feedback on his or her performance in the observation and on the written test, Career Ladder field test candidates were paid $100 for participating. This helped to reimburse them for traveling to the test site and giving up a Saturday to take the written test. No other reimbursement was provided.

Evaluator Assignment

Three evaluators were assigned to each candidate. At least one of the evaluators had to be from the same grade level or subject area as the candidate. In most cases, two or three of the evaluators had taught the same grade level or subject area. Because many of the evaluators, especially at the high school level, had qualifications in several subject areas (e.g. math and music, social studies and French), team membership varied. One set of three evaluators might evaluate all of the high school math candidates; then, in addition, one evaluator would evaluate the music candidates as part of a second team; another would evaluate French candidates as part of a third team; and the third would evaluate junior high school science as part of a fourth team.

In order to reduce travel time and expense, efforts were made to assign each evaluator to candidates in the region of the state in which he or she lived. This further complicated team assignments. Finally, as the evaluators began to schedule their visits, travel arrangements, teaching and holiday schedules, and other problems required them to occasionally trade assignments within the stated guidelines in order to complete the field test in the allocated six weeks. Despite these efforts, it became necessary to hire several of the evaluators to continue for several weeks beyond the planned field test in order to conduct visits missed because of evaluator or candidate

illness and school scheduling problems (testing, field trips).

Data Collection

Each evaluator worked independently. Each candidate was visited by each evaluator on the team separately. The first evaluator visit, termed the "A" visit, included a pre-observation conference, classroom observation, post-observation conference, and the candidate interview. The second or "B" visit included a pre-observation conference, classroom observation, post-observation conference, principal interview and questionnaires. The third or "C" visit included a pre-observation conference, classroom observation, post-observation conference and the portfolio rating. The first two visits were announced, the third was an unannounced, "drop-in" visit.

Student questionnaires were administered by the evaluator to a class of the candidates' choosing, provided that it included at least 20 students. Candidates provided a list of six peers who were familiar with their work from which three were randomly selected to complete the peer questionnaire ananonymously. Candidates were given a deadline by which portfolios had to be completed, so that the evaluator could rate them on the drop-in visit without further scheduling.

In addition to all of the evaluator administered instruments, candidates were asked to complete a background questionnaire and to take the written test. Evaluators were

also asked to complete the background questionnaire and to complete two additional forms. One asked for the evaluator's personal opinion as to the level at which the candidate was functioning (below Career Ladder I, Career Ladder I, Career Ladder II, or Career Ladder III) in each domain, and over-all. The other asked the team of three evaluators assigned to the candidate to make the same rating on a consensus basis. Finally, both evaluators and candidates were asked to evaluate the field test and the evaluation process and instruments.

Field Test Data Analysis

Computerizing The Data

Each instrument completed and turned in by the evaluators was inspected for completeness and coding accuracy. The portfolio and interview ratings had been coded onto general purpose scan documents; the remaining instruments had to be key-entered. The observation forms alone accounted for 7.5 million keystrokes, and data entry took more than a month. Every keystroke was v rified for accuracy. Despite these precautions, some out-of-range values appeared in the data and had to be reverified and corrected.

Data Analysis By Instrument

Just as each instrument was created separately prior to being incorporated into the system, each instrument was analyzed separately before being incorporated into the

over-all analysis. Preliminary analysis for each instrument included standard descriptive statistics (e.g. frequency distributions), reliability analysis, and, as appropriate, factor analysis. Descriptive statistics indicated severe skews for most items on most instruments. They also revealed that the principals had indicated "don't know" for many of the items, especially in the area of teacher evaluation practices.

Sex differences were not detected, and race differences were noted only with respect to some items in the portfolio ratings. In all, more than 300 variables per candidate were examined, many of them with more than one replication. The student questionnaires, for example, contained as many replications as the number of students in the class. The observation variables contained up to twenty-one replications (three observations with up to seven scans each).

Following the initial descriptive analysis, data were aggregated. The first aggregation was over replications. The mean value was calculated over non-missing replications. Then items were grouped for those instruments which had multiple items for the same objective. Because it was considered important that the scores finally reported be meaningful, some items related to the same objective were kept separate because they measured different aspects of that objective or because they were measured on incompatible scales.

Calculation of internal consistency reliability was conducted at each stage of aggregation. Reliabilities were generally .9 and above, indicating both that the instruments were working consistently and that they were not measuring statistically unrelated competencies. Factor analysis clearly indicated the two-objective structure of the peer questionnaire, however. It also revealed the same factor structure in the elementary and secondary versions of the student questionnaire, despite differences in respondent grade level and item wording.

Data Analysis Across Instruments

Correlations among the scores across instruments within domains tended to be low but statistically significant. In the planning domain, items from the classroom observation, portfolio, principal interview, and candidate interview were all correlated. The results of the professional skills test were significantly correlated with those of the principal interview but not with the other instruments.

In the strategies domain, which included every instrument except the peer questionnaire, the professional skills test and student questionnaire were largely uncorrelated with the other instruments. The observation, portfolio, candidate interview and principal interview were significantly correlated for most scores (the observation yielded five separate scores in this domain).

Few significant correlations were noted in the evaluation domain. The observation correlated with the

portfolio rating and candidate interview; the portfolio rating and candidate interview correlated with each other; and the student questionnaire correlated with the principal interview.

In the classroom management domain, the observation generated six separate scores. Most of these correlated with one another and with the portfolio rating. The professional skills test did not correlate with any of the other instruments, and the student questionnaire correlated with the principal interview.

The leadership domain contained two quite different competencies: professional improvement (of self), and professional leadership (of others). The professional leadership competency was correlated across the portfolio, interview, principal questionnaire, and peer questionnaire. For the professional improvement competency, however, the portfolio was correlated with the interview and the principal interview was correlated with the peer questionnaire.

The patterns of low correlations were attributed to the number of data collection methods and respondents used in the system, and the fact that data were collected by three different evaluators over a six week period. The severe data skew of most scores rendered correlations largely inappropriate in any case.

Instrument Revision

On the basis of the data analysis, each of the instruments was revised as needed. Although no items were added (except for field testing purposes), items which appeared to have functioned poorly were either deleted or revised. Decisions on item changes were made only where it was reasonable to believe that the problem was with the item rather than the field test situation, however. Several of the items on the principal questionnaire performed poorly because principals were unaware of the classroom performance of their teachers. These were kept since once aware that they would be expected to answer such items, principals could be expected to spend more time learning about their teachers' performances.

Candidate performance on the Professional Skills Test and the portfolio was severly affected by their lack of time and information to prepare for these instruments. The candidate interview may also have been affected by the lack of preparation time to a somewhat smaller extent.

Scoring and Score Reporting

Decisions as to how to handle scoring and score reporting were made by a standard setting panel composed of field test evaluators and Interim Certification Commission members who were educators. This group met over a period of several months to discuss concerns related to scoring and

reporting the data and to guide staff in their data handling efforts.

Scoring

Most scoring decisions had been made in the original instrument development by virtue of the way in which items were scaled. The observation was an exception to this situation. With multiple replications of hundreds of binary items from the coding matrices, data handling required explicit decisions as to scoring procedures. To confirm the competencies built into the system, each of the field test evaluators was asked to code an observation form by indicating to which competency each cell of the observation belonged, and whether it should be scored there positively or negatively. Agreement was high, but by no means perfect. On the basis of these data, some observation items were not scored for the field test and were eliminated from the revised observation form.

The binary items on the observation were scored and aggregated by calculating the mean based on the number of replications present. If, for example, over twenty-four replications, the teacher gave directions eighteen times, the mean for direction-giving would be 18/24, the proportion of times observed in which that teacher action was seen. Such items could be further clustered by combining several related behaviors (for example, giving directions with giving examples, providing an overview, and distinguishing steps or procedures to provide a cluster of items related to

task description). In some cases, weighting was included in the item clustering step. In classroom management, for example, having a group of children off task as opposed to a single child was given added (negative) weight.

The portfolio section containing data on student progress was eliminated in the scoring stage and from the revised portfolio because no consistent scoring of it appeared to be possible. The wide variety of types of information included in that section by teachers of various grade levels and subject areas would have required a scoring system beyond that possible with the time and resources available. The use of student progress information in the evaluation of teachers was identified as an area for further study, however.

Scaling

Through aggregation over replications and of items with the same scale which were from the same instrument and measured the same indicator, most of the more than 300 scores were combined. However, a total of 82 separate scores still needed to be reported for each candidate. These scores were on a variety of scales (one to five, zero to one, one to a hundred), with a variety of distributions (mostly skewed), and with both positive and negative orientations. These were difficult for the staff to interpret and the standard setting panel expected them to cause confusion if reported in the original scales.

Each score was, therefore, rescaled to a nine-point stanine-like scale based on the field test data. Tied scores were assigned to the same scale value, all scores were expressed in positive orientation (a high score is good), and scaling was conducted from both ends of the scale toward the middle of the distribution. The latter helped to assure maximum discrimination in the scale, especially when four or five point scales had to be mapped onto the nine point one.

Although stanine distribution percentages were established as targets for the percent of candidates to be assigned to each score category, the requirement that tied scores be assigned to the same category made exact scaling impossible. A series of rules for adjusting the next category toward the center of the distribution based on the actual proportion assigned to each category was, therefore, developed. This scaling procedure permitted each of the 82 scores to be reported on the same scale with a somewhat normalized distribution. The location of the 82 scores, by competency and instrument, are provided in the Teacher Orientation Manual in the Appendix, page 40, along with the number of items included in each.

Weighting

Not all competencies were considered equally important. For this reason, the standard setting panel decided to differentially weight the individual scores. Each domain was alotted 100 percent (100 points) and these were

distributed first by indicator and then within the indicator across instruments. Decision considerations included the number and adequacy of the items included in each score and the knowledge and objectivity level of the respondent. Weights for the items are reported in the Teacher Orientation Manual in the Appendix, page 41. (Note: following unauthorized distribution of the rating scales for the candidate interview and portfolio by the Tennessee Education Association, the interview was dropped and the rest of the system reweighted so these weights are no longer correct.)

The panel decided that the scores in the five domains should not be combined in any way since good performance in one domain would not, in their opinion, compensate for poor performance in another. Scores within each domain were combined, however, with the assigned weights in order to arrive at a total score for each of the domains. These total scores are across instruments within domains so that the candidate performs well or poorly on the domain (planning, teaching strategies, evaluation, classroom management, or leadership) rather than on the instrument (interview, classroom observation, etc.).

Cut-off Scores

The decision not to combine scores across domains required that ten cut-off scores be selected, two (one for Career Ladder II and one for Career Ladder III) for each domain. The standard setting panel chose these after

examination of the scaled and weighted field test data and with consideration of the anticipated improvements in performance once teachers were provided with sufficient information and time to prepare for the evaluation process. The importance of each competency and indicator, as judged by 1,021 Tennessee teachers was also considered. Cut-off scores selected by the panel are reported in the Teacher Orientation Manual in the Appendix, page 39.

Considerable panel discussion revolved around the importance of utilizing the expert judgment of the evaluators in the decision process. Since the instruments were constructed to be highly objective, little judgment was involved on the part of the evaluator in administering them. The panel felt it appropriate to assign some portion of the evaluation system to the expert judgment of the peer evaluators in order to compensate for the inability of the instruments to be sensitive to every teacher circumstance and classroom situation. The panel decided that 80% of the final score for each domain should be assigned to the data-based score generated from the weighted instruments and the remaining 20% should be based on the judgment of the evaluators.

Evaluator judgment was to be based on the data collected (that is, the data was to be available to the evaluators), and was to be a consensus judgment of the three evaluators. In the event that the evaluators were unable to agree (in the field test this occurred in 27 of the 278

cases, 6 of them due to a single evaluator), the evaluators could select an action depending on the cause of the disagreement. If the disagreement was based in different levels of teacher performance observed, additional observations could be scheduled. If it was based on different interpretations of agreed-upon data, the assistance of more experienced evaluators (the regional coordinators) could be used.

Implementation

Competency definition and development of the seven instruments for the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System began in the fall of 1983. The field test of the system was conducted in the spring of 1984, and data analysis took place during that summer. So did finalization and approval of the system, development of scannable documents for the observation form and other instruments, selection and the generation of contracts for 100 evaluators, the orientation and application process for candidates, revision of the training materials, and the first administration of the career ladder written test to 7,770 teachers.

Career Ladder evaluations for teachers began in the fall of 1984 and are in progress at this time. Also in the fall, development and field testing of a similar career ladder evaluation system for principals, assistant principals, and instructional supervisors was conducted. Career Ladder evaluations are now underway for these groups

as well. Development of career ladder evaluation systems, similar to the teacher system, for special education and vocational education teachers is now complete, and the field testing is underway at this time. The Departments of Corrections and Mental Health are receiving assistance in developing similar systems of their own, and other certificated educator groups (school psychologists, school social workers, librarians and media specialists, audiologists, etc.) are in the process of developing their own competencies.

Tennessee expects to name its first Career Level II and III teachers in late spring or early summer, 1985, culminating the development of the statewide teacher assessment system in just under two years.

LOCAL EVALUATION FOR THE CAREER LADDER PROGRAM

Introduction

While the Comprehensive Education Reform Act (CERA) requires the state to evaluate teachers at Career Levels II and III, local school systems are responsible for the evaluation of teachers at the probationary level, apprentice level, and Career Level I. Probationary and apprentice teachers are evaluated annually and Career Level I teachers are evaluated twice in a five year period.

The law requires that local school systems evaluate teachers using procedures which follow state guidelines. School systems must submit their teacher evaluation systems to the State Department of Education for approval by the State Board of Education. If local school systems do not submit an evaluation plan, or if the evaluation plan submitted is not approved by the State Department of Education, local school systems must use the state model for teacher evaluation. This model is similar to that used by the State for Career Ladder II and III.

The State Board of Education issued two sets of guidelines for teacher evaluation in the Career Ladder Program, one for 1984-85 and the other for 1985-86. The guidelines for 1984-85 require that the evaluation system address four of the domains of competency--Planning, Teaching Strategies, Evaluation and Classroom Management. The guidelines for 1985-86 require that the evaluation system address all six domain areas. Therefore, in 1985-86, the domains of Professional Leadership and Communicates Effectively are added at the local level.

The reason for the two sets of guidelines is to allow school systems a reasonable length of time to develop and implement evaluation systems that are congruent with the evaluation system used for Career Level II and III.

Local Use of the State Model for Career Ladder Evaluation

The state of Tennessee issued 1984-85 guidelines for local evaluation in May, 1984. This paper will address the State Evaluation Model that has been created to meet the requirements of the 1984-85 guidelines.

It became apparent shortly after the guidelines were issued that a majority of school systems would elect to use the State Model for local evaluation rather than submit their own local evaluation plan for approval. Of 142 school systems in Tennessee, 122 are using the State Model for the evaluation of Career Ladder personnel. There were several reasons why the majority of school systems in the state elected to use the State Model. In a review of existing evaluation systems, the State Department of Education staff found that local evaluation systems had not focused their descision-making upon the critical areas involved in effective teaching practices. The evaluation instrumentation was often a high inference check list with no objective information. Training of evaluators was almost non-existent. In some of the more sophisticated evaluation systems, the formative aspects of evaluation were addressed, but the evaluation systems did not provide for summative conclusions or for recommendations for rehiring based upon the evaluation process.

In the Career Ladder evaluation process, the decision-model for advancement is critical. Not only does it determine whether a teacher

is rehired by a local school system, but it also determines the certification level of the teacher. One advances through the certification process from the probationary level to the apprentice level to Career Level I. At each step in the evaluation/certification process, higher standards are required for each domain of competence.

Multiple Data Sources in the State Model

The state model was developed to be similar to the evaluation system used for Career Level II and III. Therefore, a modified multiple data source concept was used to measure the four domain areas.

One data source is the use of previous evaluations. Since a principal is to assist a teacher at the lower rungs of the ladder in improving skills through staff development, a longitudinal assessment and review of progress is a necessary beginning for each school year's evaluation.

A second data source is a review of the teacher's lesson plans. Prior to the first observation visit, the teacher provides the evaluator with a lesson plan. The state model provides the evaluator with a check list of areas to examine when assessing the lesson plans. (see Appendix B, State Model, p. 11). The evaluator rates the lesson plan and reports its strengths and areas for improvement to the teacher during the first pre observation conference. The lesson plan analysis primarily addresses the planning domain of competence.

A third data source is the classroom observation. Classroom observations must be conducted at least twice. Each observation is a three-step process consisting of the pre observation conference, the observation, and the post observation conference. During the pre

observation conference, the evaluator gathers information needed to understand the classroom lesson. The pre observation form is shown in Appendix B, State Model, p. 14. The second step is the classroom observation. It is scheduled for a minimum of forty-five minutes. During the observation the evaluator codes and writes appropriate information on an observation form. This form is a simplified version of the low inference instrument used for Career Levels II and III. Although using a higher inference coding system, it still addresses the competencies in the Career Ladder Program. The information coded on the observation form is cumulated and interpreted. The observation form and the behaviorally anchored rating scale are displayed in Appendix B, State Model, pp. 16, 17. The third step, the postobservation conference, provides the evaluator with an opportunity to discuss the strengths and areas for improvement from the observation with the teacher.

The fourth data source is a teacher conference. At this time the evaluator discusses competencies that cannot be measured in a classroom observation or identified in a written lesson plan. The teacher conference covers areas such as goals and objectives, the use of instructional materials, and the use of diagnostic and student assessment information. The teacher conference form is shown in Appendix B, State Model, p. 22.

The Decision Model

The decision model is based upon the total evaluation process including a written improvement plan. One of the prime reasons for the evaluation is to assist the teacher in improving his or her skills

during the school year. As the evaluator carries out the process, an improvement plan must be provided to the teacher. A comprehensive staff development program is available to teachers in the Career Ladder Program. The Tennessee Instructional Model has been created to match the domains and indicators of competence in the teacher evaluation system. The form for the improvement plan is shown in Appendix B, State Model, p. 26.

The evaluator must combine information from all of the data sources to make the summative decision concerning a teacher's performance. During a year end conference with the teacher, the evaluator rates the teacher's performance on behaviorally anchored rating scales which are matched to each of the competency areas. Each certification level has its own competency standard. As one moves up the Career Ladder from the probationary level to the apprentice level to Career Level I, the performance standards increase. The summative forms and rating scales are contained on pp. 30 - 58 of the State Model.

Management System for Local Evaluation

The Comprehensive Education Reform Act requires local education agencies to be responsible for teacher evaluation at the lower rungs of the Career Ladder. The evaluation is for employment at the local level and for the issuance of a teacher's certificate. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the state reviews the local evaluations for apprentice and Career Level I certificates. Because of the importance of these evaluations, the number of them which must be carried out, and the variety of forms and schedules required depending on the teacher's status in the system, it is imperative that the local school systems

have an efficient management system for handling the evaluation procedures and forms.

The State Model for Local Evaluation provides a management system for local school systems to systematically record and monitor the required teacher evaluations. This management system is shown on pp. 59-71 of the State Model, Appendix B.

Summary

The Career Ladder Program in Tennessee is a comprehensive teacher evaluation and certification system. The program is designed to attract, retain and reward excellent teachers. On the basis of performance evaluation, teachers can move-up a Career Ladder which provides monetary incentives of $1000 to $7000 and allows the teacher professional growth opportunities through assisting beginning teachers and other extended contract activities. Evaluation at Levels II and III of the Career Ladder is a state responsibility and is conducted by a team of three full-time peer evaluators from outside the candidate's school system. The evaluation system at Career Level II and III uses a multiple data source approach with minimum qualifying scores required for each level.

Local school systems are responsible for evaluation at the three lower levels of the Career Ladder--the probationary level, the apprentice level, and Career Level I. School systems may submit their own evaluation system to the State Department of Education for approval or may use a State Model for Local Evaluation for Career Ladder evaluation. In either case, the required match between the local and state evaluation at all levels of the Career Ladder Program provides

teachers with a consistent, sequenced evaluation program. The additional links to a career development program, including the Tennessee Instructional Model, allow teachers to improve their performance as they climb the ladder. Career Level II and III teachers are assigned to assist teachers at the lower levels of the ladder to provide continuous monitoring and support for teachers at the school building level. The Career Ladder Program in Tennessee allows teachers many options as they approach their chosen careers. All aspects of the ladder are structured to attract outstanding teachers to the profession, to retain them in the profession, and to reward them for outstanding performance.